

## [C. M. Deal Jr.]

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C. M. Deal, Jr. (Textile- worker)

Kannapolis, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Kannapolis Cannonville

C. M. Deal J. C. Link

Catawba County Canton County

Peggy Ann Betty Jean

Shirley Belinda Sara Dee

Beulah Blanch

Carl Jim C9 - 1/22/41 - N.C.

Young [Deal?] Link , known to his friends as "J. C.", looked fondly at his daughter Sara Dee, as she leaned over the pink-lined bassinet where her little sister, Betty Jean, was pleading with both hands to be taken up.

"I am twenty one years old, was born and reared on a farm in Canton County, went through high school, left home at sixteen and was married before I was eighteen. I had an

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older brother who also left home young and when my sister married mother sold the farm and moved near town.

“During vacation and after school hours I worked on the farm of one of the neighbors. He was a truck farmer. He raised cabbage, tomatoes, celery and peppers. All day long, from six to six, I'd set plants. I tell you I dreamed of them dad-blamed plants every night. Ten cents an hour was what he paid me. I walked two miles every day to his place and carried my own lunch. He said I was the best hand he ever had to work. I done a man's work every day. My sister lived in Cannonville and wanted me to come down here and get me a job in the mill. When I finished school I come. after After staying six weeks, I got on the scrubbing gang. Nearly all new hands with no experience has to take their first job on the scrubbing gang; I was 2 no exception. I didn't mind it. I was willing to take a job at anything to got started, It's pretty hard to get a job in a big mill like that without experience. I'd never seen inside of any kind of a mill. I made a dollar and eighty cents a day. That's not much when you pay five for board. I joined the Y.M.C.A., that took a dollar a month. Then there's hair cuts and pressing bills. I done my own shaving.” Sara Dee climbed into his arms and run her small fingers lovingly over his face. J. C. [laid?] his cigarette on a tray, reached over and put the soft pink blanket over Betty's feet.

“I tell you,” he said, “I've had the dickens of a time since these babies came. It takes everything I make to pay bills.

“A good worker don't stay on the scrubbing gang long. It's a kind of a try-out to see what you can do. I stayed on there three months and was transferred to number six. The mill at that time had forty acres of floor, now it's much larger, each part is numbered. You step out of number one and go to number two and so on. Number six and number seven is where they weave. I cleaned looms in number six and swept the floor. It took such a short time to sweep, I had plenty spare time to learn how to weave. I took 3 advantage of this and could soon handle a set of looms as good as anybody. My boss man was fine, treated me well and encouraged me all he could. The first opening he had two months later, I got it. The

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funniest thing- I weaved next to a baptist preacher. He told me in confidence one night, his salary was so small at the country church where he preached, he was forced to come to the mill and get a job. That man made a good weaver too, he'd gotten his education at one of the leading universities of the south.

Blanch, J.C's wife, was busy in the kitchen. Coming to the door she said, "J.C., how do you want that chicken fixed?

"Fried, of course."

"I mean, do you want gravy?"

"I sure do, the longest you've ever made. Sara Dee and me is about starved." Blanch laughed, "You always say you are starved and then never eat much."

"My first pay check on the weaving job was forty six dollars. I felt like a millionaire. I'd stayed with my sister for a while. Her health got bad; she'd gone to a hospital and I'd moved to a boarding house. There's quite a difference in boarding houses and private homes. At my sister's I was one of the family. The food was splendid and served well. At the boarding house you knew exactly what you were going to have each meal. I eat eggs and 4 bacon for breakfast 'till I got so I quit going to the dining room. Sunday, it was chicken and dressing. We like surprises like chicken and gravy, don't we Sara Dee?" Sara grinned and cuddled closer. "This baby sticks to me like a burr."

"It's because you take her with you everywhere you go," said Blanch from the kitchen.

"I intend to be a companion to my daughters. I want them to feel they can have a good time with their daddy.

"After I went to weaving I changed boarding places again. It was higher, of course, this time I went to the best place in town. About thirty boys boarded there. The service was fine and the meals good. But I got tired of it in a couple of weeks. The fact is, I missed my

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home and mother. I worked hard at home, mother did too, she was the backbone of our family; but she was never too tired or busy to sit down and talk things over with me. I could tell her anything and she always understood. A boarding house is all right for a place to eat and sleep, but there's times when you don't want to do either.

"I worked in number six a while; it was closed down and I was transferred to number seven; I been there ever since. I weave towels, sheeting, but that's not all they 5 make. Window shades, draperies, wash cloths, beach robes, table linen and kotex; that's not all, I can't remember everything.

"Cannonville is the fastest growing town in the world. It started with one little old mill and now it's about the biggest textile center in the country. It has a population of about twenty five thousand people. The Canton family has a [controllin? ] controlling interest in the mills here and they own mills at various other places. For the last year they been tearing down old buildings and replacing them with new ones. The old Y.M.C.A. where I spent so many hours in my young days is being replaced by a half million dollar building." J.C. smiled at his young wife. "That Y.M.C.A. saved me from destruction." He said teasingly. "I spent hours there with the boys to get away from the boarding house. It was well-equipped and up-to-date but the new one will be more modern and nicer. At home I was a regular book worm, but here I jst just couldn't read much; too many people going and coming. I'd go the Y, select me a good book, light a cigarette and prepare for a good evening. About the time I'd get started, someone would tap ne on the shoulder and want me to play a game of pool. I don't shoot pool, never 6 did like it, and only play to please or be sociable.

"The old Y had a swimming pool, barber shop, library, reading rooms, pool table; no betting. A place to box and play basket ball. We have a fine baseball park and a good team. I can't resist going to the ball games. Blanch don't go much since Betty Jean came. But she'll soon be old enough to take. One thing I like about my wife, we both have the same tastes. We can go to a good show and have the best time. We get a woman to keep Betty Jean on account of germs."

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"J.C. you say things so funny."

"Isn't that the reason we don't take her to the show?"

"Yes, of course."

"As I said before, all of the old buildings are being replaced by new modern up-to-date buildings. We have a new jail and the Colonial theatre is one of the finest in the south. There's so many people here and only four theaters, it's hard sometimes to see a show you want to. A couple months ago my brother-in-law and me went on Saturday night. We went to the first show. Making the rounds of all four theaters we couldn't get a seat, and came back home to wait for the second show. The last time we went back we got standing room inside the door. My brother-in-law is kinder hotheaded-the usher came around and wanted to close the door; he couldn't we were against it and couldn't move. 'Have you 7 gentlemen bought your tickets?' He asked.

"You're dern right we have," Jim replied. The second time he came around he said, 'Excuse me, but I must close the door.'"

"You can't close it," Jim replied, "we can't move an inch."

"The third time he said, 'I'm very sorry, but I'll give you your money back as the door has to be closed.' It tickled me, I knew he had orders to close the door.

"Jim got so mad he said, 'Get our money and damn quick too.'"

"They're building two new theaters now. When the town was built the sidewalks were narrow. These are being torn up and new ones laid.

"There's seventeen churches here for the white. The negroes have three or maybe more. I belong to the Lutheran, my wife is a Baptist. We don't argue over it and we haven't decided if either one will change. My mother was a Methodist, she joined the Lutheran

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after marriage so we'd all be in one church. My wife is a christian, that is more important to me than what church she belongs to." J.C slid Shirley Sara Lee to the floor, got up to look for a pack of cigarettes. "My salary at the present is forty nine dollars every two weeks.

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I pay fifteen dollars house rent, besides lights and water bill. This house don't belong to the mill. Everything is so filled up I can't get a house in town. I own my own car; my house is furnished throughout. I owe the furniture man fifty dollars, the hospital a hundred. We're living within our income and paying our debts. Groceries are high, clothes and other things about the same as other places. I'm worried about the three lots next to me. I want to buy them and build me a home. I can't do it 'till I get out of debt. I've got all I can carry now, with only a few extra dollars for medicine and recreation- I feel that is a necessity. After working eight hours a day you have to have an outlet. If we have no money to [spend?] for a show or ball game, we take a long drive in the country.

"I carry insurance on myself, enough to take care of my little family, should anything happen. We go to church and pay our dues. I also pay to the Salvation Army, they done lots for our men in the war. I take the daily papers, read them to keep myself informed of what's going on. We [?] have one pocket book, my wife is allowed the same priveleges I take myself. I was too young to get married. I did it to get a home. I knew we could work together to that end. Our home is to be built on christanity and love. My mother 9 taught me that and it is my principle. I believe in helping the fellow who is down and out. If you give him a shove, you're not doing much good.

"Blanch and I both wanted a boy. The doctor had said no more children for years to come, perhaps never. When Betty Jean came she was such a sweet little mite, neither one of us was disappointed. We just love her the same. I want you to look at my house. I've tried to buy the best things and furnish it so they won't have to be changed in our new home. We're planning a six room brick house with bath. This is only five and no bath. We have plenty room as it is.

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"I like chickens. I've got some nice ones in the lot. Once you live on the farm, it never gets out of you."

"The chicken is going to be spoiled for dinner," Blanch said, trailing around after us with Betty Jean in her arms.

"We'll eat wehn the story is finished. I want to be good and hungry.

"It takes longer to pay for good furniture and rugs. Once you get them they last and look good. I don't want my rooms too crowded and I don't want them to look bare. The babies must have a nice soft palce to sit and play. That's 10 why I paid lots more for this rug than I should. This extra chair with the foot rest is just the thing for Blanch to lounge in. I prefer a good substantial one like this.

"My new home is going to have a rock garden, a pool, and a flower garden. There's going to be a chicken lot with plenty of fryers. I've not forgotten the vegetable garden. We got to have plenty of fresh vegetables. I don't like stale things bought at the store. My babies and ourselves too have to have the right kind of vitamins. Blanch took home economics in school. She likes to can and have the pantry shelves full. I'm lucky to have such a wife, but no other kind wouldn't have satisfied me. We're going fifty-fifty on this marriage. There's to be no nagging and fussing about every little thing that comes up. We want our children to bring their friends home. We'll make it pleasant so they can have good times." As we surveyed the bedroom with the rose colored hangings, Blanch called from the kitchen, "I won't wait another instant, dinner is served."

"That's orders. When Blanch talks like that I move."

Seated around the white table, Sara in her high bob, with a bib on, touched her lips lightly with her napkin. J.C bowed his head and gave thanks." I'm ashamed of myself, 11 I fret

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and fume inside 'cause I can't do things in a hurry. I'm not twenty-two yet, there's plenty of time to get it done. What you say we all go to the show and have a good time?"

"They're showing a picture-At Dawn I Die. Sounds horrible," said Blanch.

"Oh no, it's not, I saw a few sketches of it last week." Betty Jean was left with her grandmother while Sara, proud as punch, not on her daddy's lap and tried to drive the car. Blanch, a pretty dark-headed quiet girl looked fondly at her young husband. "J. C. when we get our house, let's have a pink running rose over the car shed door with a yellow heart."

"We will, and I want lilacs at the living room window for the birds to build in."